

dentist. Never try to fool your child. Don't tell him you are "just going down town," then suddenly swing him into the dental office without warning. If he's faced with corrective work – like straightening the teeth – don't pretend that it won't be a nuisance. If your child trusts you, he can take bad news.

Praise him for behaving well in the dental chair. By the way, he'll behave much better if, once you have stayed long enough to let him establish friendly relations with the dentist, you go out to do a little shopping. Incidentally the dentist prefers it, too, because it's easier to get co-operation from a child when only the dentist or assistant is telling the child what to do!

Mother can also become informed on the role of fluorides in reducing tooth decay. Your family dentist will explain the benefits and safety of fluoridation. The greatest benefit comes when teeth are forming – from birth to age 12. He can tell you whether your community's water supply is fluoridated. If it is, or contains the proper amount of fluorides naturally, your child will have considerably less decay than he would without the advantages of water fluoridation. Fluoride is carefully regulated in water in the proportion of one part fluoride to one million parts water. Cost of this community service is extremely small in comparison with the costs of dental treatment.

If you don't have water with the recommended amount of fluoride, ask your family dentist about the use of tablets or drops which, if taken regularly at prescribed doses, can supply the necessary fluoride for your child.

Several methods of applying fluorides to the surface of teeth are available. The dentist or his hygienist may paint the child's teeth with fluoride.

Various methods of application to the surface of the teeth are being used in dental offices, and in schools.

## Mother can:

- Make dental appointments a regular habit.
- Have her child face his introduction to the dentist with interest and confidence.
- Conduct the visit as a common life experience similar to a shopping expedition or visit to the physician.
- Make it an opportunity to praise him and build his self-confidence.
- Become informed on the role of fluorides in reducing tooth decay.
- Supervise the proper method of brushing and flossing.
- Prepare wholesome, nutritious meals.

## What junior can do...

Developing good tooth brushing habits at an early age is very important.

When junior is small it's not enough simply to tell him to brush and rinse. Parents must also supervise tooth brushing and even demonstrate by brushing their child's teeth until the correct technique has been learned. It takes time for the young child to develop the skill to handle a toothbrush well. Of course, the best way to encourage the tooth brushing habit is by example. If the whole family head for their toothbrushes after eating, it becomes a matter of routine, with junior not needing to be told every time to brush his teeth. Flossing of junior's teeth by mother should be done daily until junior is old enough to be able to floss his own teeth. Again, flossing daily can become a routine matter, along with the tooth brushing habit.

The reason it's so important to brush your teeth immediately after eating and before going to bed is that tooth decay is caused by acids produced by bacteria feeding on sweet food particles in the mouth. Brush them away each time, immediately after you eat, and you have brushed out the likelihood of decay. Don't forget to floss thoroughly once a day. If junior cannot brush after eating, he should rinse his mouth with water.

Encourage your child to eat foods that are good for health and yet low in decay-producing sugar. Some examples are milk, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, eggs, cheese and whole-grain cereals. These are also good for snacks. However, restrict sweet foods such as cake, jam, soft drinks and candy which increase tooth decay and dull the appetite. Establish a special treat time, for example after the occasional meal, when he can eat candy and then follow up with tooth brushing.

## Your child can:

- Take pride in shining, white teeth.
- Get the habit of brushing right after eating.
- Get the habit of flossing once a day.
- Enjoy eating foods good for health at meals and for snacks.
- Look forward to a special treat time.

## Early and regular dental care pays off in:

- Smiles you are proud of.
- Avoidance of infections.
- A minimum of dental discomfort.
- Lower annual dental bills.
- Better general health.



Ontario

Ministry of  
Health

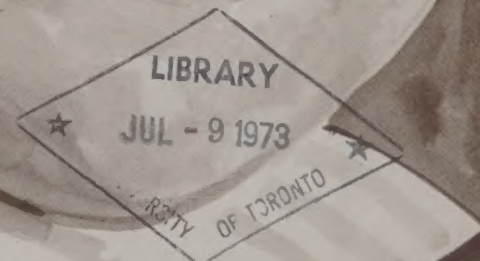
Hon. Richard T. Potter, M.D., Minister

72-5529 4221-111 3-73-50M

CA20N  
H  
-2207



## Dating the Dentist





## Preparing the child for regular dental care

As baby grows into childhood, the years begin to mark themselves off in certain patterns. Every year there is Christmas and his birthday; there are also Hallowe'en and certain special visits – for instance, the annual check-up by the doctor.

By the time he reaches 2½ or 3, junior is ready to add another excursion to his list – the first of his many regular twice-a-year visits to the dentist.

## Why start so young?

Cavities don't wait for children to grow up. Forty per cent of 3-year-old children in Ontario already have tooth decay. However, for the 3-year-old, tooth decay can be prevented. With prevention of decay, premature loss of teeth and resulting irregularities of the mouth can be avoided. The pits and grooves of the teeth are the areas most likely to develop cavities; for this reason, early examination by the dentist is essential at age 2½. By this age, junior should have all his baby teeth.

It is a good idea to start your child on the habit of regular dental visits at a young age when there is little to be done other than examination, x-rays and a prophylaxis (cleaning of the teeth). These can be pleasant experiences. The child who makes a friend of his dentist at an early age will look forward with pleasure to his regular dental office visits.

Childhood is a time of growth and development for the teeth and jaws as well as the most active period for tooth decay. Keeping your child's teeth in first-class condition during this time will save many discomforts, even illnesses, in later years.

## What the dentist can do...

The child may have his own appointment as his first "get-acquainted" visit or preferably come along on one of his parent's visits. It should be treated as another of life's experiences common to everybody. In the first appointment the child's teeth may be cleaned, a small pit cavity filled or x-rays taken.

With x-rays the dentist can find small or hidden cavities. He can also foresee and correct development of irregular teeth. X-rays are taken with great safety precautions. Regular check-ups and treatment usually make it possible to bring a child to adulthood without the loss of



a single tooth. And yet, in Canada today, the average 16-year-old has already lost two permanent teeth. This is needless and often results in teeth growing in crooked and not meeting properly.

As the child becomes older he will be more likely to develop gum problems. Often, without the person realizing it, hard deposits form around the teeth – even if teeth are well brushed. To prevent gum disease, these deposits must be removed regularly by the dentist or his hygienist. Soft deposits including food debris also irritate the gums causing swelling and bleeding. The dentist or his dental hygienist will give instruction in proper brushing to prevent such soft deposits accumulating.

## The dentist can:

- Make friendly visits of dental appointments.
- Take the steps necessary to prevent problems with developing teeth and jaws.
- Clean teeth in a special way to remove stains and deposits that cannot be removed by brushing and flossing.
- Paint teeth with fluoride to protect them against tooth decay.
- Explain home care of the child's teeth to both mother and child.
- Treat early decay in teeth while damage is slight.

## What mothers can do...

It's mother who makes appointments, and it's also mother who prepares her child for his dental date. It should be treated as a matter of fact, not a subject for discussion. It should be described like any other excursion, particularly like a visit to the physician, only this doctor is specially interested in junior's teeth. Avoid baiting the child by special promises of treats or gifts if he behaves well.

Above all, mother should not give her child the idea of fear. Many adults like to exaggerate their sufferings in the dental chair, which may have been real enough in the days before local anaesthetics were widely used. Never frighten your child by tales of torture or threats of the drill or anything else. If you do, you will be storing up trouble for him and yourself.

It's not hypocrisy, but quite true, to tell a child that if he goes to a dentist regularly and looks after his teeth at home, he will enjoy his dental visits. Children brought up this way look forward to a session with their friend, the

